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FM AMEMBASSY LISBON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 2054

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CONFIDENTIAL LISBON 1377

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: PGOV, PFOR, PO

SUBJECT: CONGRESSIONAL HEARING ON PORTUGAL

REF: STATE 53496

1. FROM OUR VANTAGE POINT, MARCH 14 NOT PROPITIOUS DAY FOR
DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY TO BE TESTIFYING IN OPEN SESSION ON
PORTUGAL.

2. RECOGNIZE, HOWEVER, THAT TUESDAY ABORTIVE COUP WILL HAVE
STIMULATED INTEREST IN SITUATION HERE. IF TESTIMONY CANNOT
BE POSTPONED, BELIEVE CONSIDERATION SHOULD BE GIVEN TO
TESTIFYING IN EXECUTIVE SESSION.

3. AS DEPARTMENT AWARE, THERE APPEARS TO BE AN ORGANIZED
CAMPAIGN ALLEGING U.S. COMPLICITY IN MARCH 11 COUP.
THEREFORE COMMENTS IN THIS AREA MUST BE HANDLED WITH EXTREME
CAUTION.

4. SUBCOMMITTEE CHAIRMAN FASCELL IS KNOWN TO ME PERSONALLY
FROM MY DAYS AS OEO DIRECTOR. AT YOUR DISCRETION YOU MAY INFORM
HIM THAT IT IS MY PERSONAL BELIEF EXECUTIVE SESSION PREFERABLE.
CARLUCCI

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State Dept. review completed

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PAGE 01

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY LISBON IMMEDIATE 9903

BT

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 057130

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PGOV, PFOR, PO

SUBJECT: CONGRESSIONAL HEARING ON PORTUGAL

REF: LISBON 1377

1. ON THE BASIS OF YOUR CABLE, WE CALLED CHAIRMAN FASCELL TO IMPRESS ON HIM THE DELICATE SITUATION YOU FACE, ESPECIALLY AS NOTED IN PARA 3, IN LIGHT OF WHICH WE SUGGESTED POSTPONEMENT OF HEARING OR GOING TO EXECUTIVE SESSION.

2. FASCELL SAID HE APPRECIATED CONCERN. HE NOTED, HOWEVER, THAT HIS SUBCOMMITTEE WAS ONLY SEEKING GENERAL INFORMATION ON A TROUBLE SPOT. HE SAID HE PREFERRED TO BEGIN IN OPEN SESSION BUT WOULD MOVE TO EXECUTIVE SESSION IF SENSITIVE ISSUES RAISED. HE PROMISED CALL THE MEMBERS TOGETHER BEFORE THE SESSION TO ALLOW LAINGEN AND HIMSELF TO IMPRESS UPON THEM THAT SOME SEEMINGLY INNOCENT COMMENT COULD BE PLAYED BACK IN MAGNIFIED FORM IN A VOLATILE LISBON TO THE DETRIMENT OF US INTERESTS. FASCELL IS CONVINCED THIS WILL HAVE A POSITIVE EFFECT ON THE MEMBERS.

3. HE ALSO SUGGESTED THAT IT WOULD BE BEST TO RAISE THE QUESTION OF CIA INVOLVEMENT IN THE COUP AT THE OUTSET SO WE COULD COME BACK WITH A CATEGORIC NO AND PUT AN END TO THAT ISSUE. (FYI THIS IS IN THE PREPARED OPENING STATEMENT.)

4. WE ARE CONVINCED BY FASCELL THAT ON BALANCE IT IS BEST TO GO AHEAD WITH HEARINGS IN OPEN SESSION. WE WILL KEEP YOU INFORMED.

INGERSOLL

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C O N F I D E N T I A L

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Date: 14 Ma
Item No: 9
Ref No:

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C, (PORTUGAL)

C, WASHINGTON (UPI) -- A STATE DEPARTMENT OFFICIAL TOLD CONGRESS
e TODAY THAT THE CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY PLAYED NO PART IN THE
e ABORTED MILITARY COUP IN PORTUGAL LAST TUESDAY.

Thue "I REGRET THE IMPRESSION THAT IS ABROAD THAT THE UNITED STATES IS
w TRYING TO UNDO THE EFFORTS OF THE REVOLUTIONARY GOVERNMENT," SAID L.
Bruce LAINGEN, DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF STATE FOR EUROPEAN
AFFAIRS.

LegC "WE HAVE DEMONSTRATED IN PUBLIC STATEMENTS AND PRIVATELY THAT WE
genC SUPPORT THE EFFORTS OF THE GOVERNMENT. ALSO, WE HAVE BEEN AND ARE
PROVIDING TANGIBLE SUPPORT FOR THE GOVERNMENT IN ITS EFFORTS TO
IMPROVE CONDITIONS IN PORTUGAL."

HE SAID THE COUP RECEIVED NO AID FROM THE CIA OR ANY OTHER BRANCH
OF THE U.S. GOVERNMENT, INCLUDING THE EMBASSY AND THE ENTIRE
DIPLOMATIC MISSION IN LISBON.

LAINGEN, TESTIFYING BEFORE A HOUSE FOREIGN AFFAIRS SUBCOMMITTEE,
DESCRIBED PORTUGAL "AS AN OLD AND VALUED FRIEND" OF THE UNITED
STATES.

"PORTUGAL'S ANNOUNCED INTENTION TO BUILD DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS
WILL CONTINUE TO HAVE OUR SUPPORT," LAINGEN SAID.

"WE PRESCRIBE NO MODELS FOR PORTUGAL. OUR INTEREST IS NO MORE AND
NO LESS THAN THE PRESERVATION OF AN ATMOSPHERE IN WHICH THE FREE WILL
OF THE PORTUGUESE PEOPLE CAN BE EXPRESSED."

LAINGEN SAID THE UNITED STATES, WHICH IS CONVINCED THE PORTUGUESE
REVOLUTIONARY GOVERNMENT WILL HOLD FREE ELECTIONS NEXT MONTH, "WOULD
NATURALLY REGRET ANY DEVELOPMENT, FROM WHATEVER QUARTER, THAT WOULD
INTERRUPT THEM."

UPI 03-14 12:43 PED

Comment.